

Youth Gambling

FACT SHEET

Possible warning signs of a gambling problem:

- Chasing losses, or gambling to win back money previously lost
- Larger and more frequent bets
- Preoccupation with thoughts of gambling
- Mood swings and feelings of stress during attempts to cut back
- Gambling to escape or forget problems
- Lying about gambling activities
- Borrowing or stealing money to gamble
- Others making comments about your gambling
- Failing grades, school absenteeism
- Appearing 'spaced out' while gambling
- Pinning hopes on the 'big win'

Gambling involves any situation in which a person risks something of value on an uncertain outcome in hopes of increasing value or profit. It includes activities such as playing cards, dice games, or video games for money, buying raffle tickets, or betting on the outcomes of sporting events.

Is youth gambling a problem?

Gambling is illegal for British Columbian youth under the age of 19 years . Although problem gambling has been primarily thought of as an adult behaviour, gambling activities appear to be particularly attractive for youth today. A McGillUniversity survey in Montreal showed that 30% of grade 7 students gambled at least once a week. In this sample, while 55% of youth were casual or recreation gamblers, 13% had gambling related problems, and 4 to 6% had a serious problem. Research also indicates that many adults with gambling problems were first exposed to gambling early in their lives – usually around the age of 10 years. Youth are most often introduced to gambling by their families.

What do youth gamble on?

The 2004 Canadian Campus Survey showed that, for undergraduate students, lottery and raffle tickets are the most popular (51%), followed by slot machines/video lottery (22.7%), casino gambling (19%), card, dice, or other games (17.7%), and sports event betting (10.8%). The least reported activities include betting on horse or dog races (3.7%), internet gambling (1.5%), and betting with a bookie (0.8%).

Why do youth gamble?

Youth with serious gambling problems report that gambling helps them forget about problems or offers a sense that nothing else matters. The three main reported reasons for gambling by youth are excitement, enjoyment, and winning money. Other reasons why youth may gamble include peer pressure and to relieve feelings of boredom or depression.

What are the possible negative outcomes of youth gambling?

Gambling can negatively affect relationships with friends and family. It can interfere with academic performance, employment and finances, and physical, social, and mental health.

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Among youth, gambling is now more common than using drugs or smoking!

30% of grade 7 students gamble at least once a week!

Youth are *2 to 4 times* more likely than adults to become problem gamblers!

Websites with more information on youth gambling

www.luckyday.ca

www.youthbet.net



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When does gambling become a problem?

Problem gambling occurs when someone experiences a loss of control over their gambling habits. They may begin by spending more money than intended, playing for longer than planned, wanting to gamble when other things should be occurring, being unable to stop thinking about it, or gambling to escape problems, to feel important, or to feel alive. Problem gamblers tend to neglect their personal needs, their nutrition, and their sleep. Gambling problems may lead to money problems, difficulty in school, trouble keeping a job, problems with parents, troubled friendships and relationships, lying, stealing, problems with the law, feelings of depression or anxiousness, and feeling irritable when trying to stop.

What can parents do to educate their children and to support them if they have a gambling problem?

Parents have an important role in prevention. Talking to your child about what gambling is and what the potential risks are is a first step. Online gambling is popular among many youth; therefore monitoring a child's online activities can offer a preventative strategy. Remind your child that gambling is not legal if under the age of 19 years.

Resources

- B.C. Problem Gambling Help Line
 - 1-888-795-6111
- Gamblers Anonymous
 - www.gamblersanonymous.org
- Youth and Gambling. Mental Health and Addiction Services
 - <http://www.camh.net/>
- Canadian Campus Survey, 2004
 - <http://www.ccsa.ca/Eng/Statistics/Canada/GS/Pages/default.aspx>
- Kelty Mental Health Resource Centre
 - <http://keltymentalhealth.ca/>
- Canadian Mental Health Association
 - <http://www.cmha.ca/>
- Mind Check
 - <http://mindcheck.ca/>